

# Park and Recreation

**Mission.** The mission of the Park and Recreation Department is to provide a cost-effective system of safe and attractive parks and recreation land, facilities and programs that enhance the beautification of the City, provide for the leisure time pursuits of all Wichita residents and visitors, and promote appreciation of the City's environmental resources.

**Overview.** The Park and Recreation Department provides recreational opportunities, maintains landscaping at City parks, facilities, and along right-of-ways, and operates a number of cultural and performing arts facilities. The department supports over 3,700 acres of parks and greenways, ten recreation centers, twelve swimming pools, an art center, numerous youth-based activities and athletics programs, and a municipal golf course system.

Department operating units consist of Administration, Landscape & Forestry, Botanica, Maintenance, Recreation, CityArts, Century II, Expo Hall, Omnisphere, Historical Museum, and the Wichita Boathouse.

Administration provides leadership, management, and direction for all Park and Recreation operating units. The division is tasked with financial and budgetary planning and reporting, as well as capital project initiation and development.

Landscape & Forestry is responsible for maintaining the aesthetic appearance of highly visible plantings and greenways in public places and carrying out a comprehensive tree planting, maintenance, and removal program. The division provides landscape maintenance



*Utilizing the best technology available, Forestry crews prune or remove nearly 20,000 trees annually.*

in the downtown area of the City, including the East Bank area, Old Town, and the Museum District. Forestry operations center on plantings in public venues, pruning and removal of trees in parks and along right-of-ways, and cleanup of debris associated with storms. In 1998, 2,388

trees were planted, 15,909 trees were pruned, and 2,245 dead or otherwise hazardous trees were removed within the City limits.

Major Service Levels: Forestry Operations			
	1998	1999	2000
Trees planted	2,388	2,500	2,500
Trees pruned	15,909	17,000	17,000
Trees removed	2,245	2,000	2,000

Botanica, the Wichita Gardens, is a public-private partnership between the City of Wichita and Botanica, Inc. The City provides an annual operating subsidy of \$250,000 that provides salary support and basic insurance coverage. Attendance at Botanica is on the rise, with 112,938 paid visitors in 1998, up eight percent from 1997.

Selected Performance Measures			
	1998	1999	2000
Annual visitors	112,938	115,000	120,000
Private dollars raised	\$618,300	\$700,000	\$800,000

The Maintenance Division provides basic mowing services for over 4,220 acres of parks, rights-of-way, and athletic fields. In addition, the division supports the Department's recreational facilities by providing plumbing, electrical, and other general maintenance services. A sub-unit of the division inspects and maintains playground equipment to ensure public safety. A \$1 million playground improvement plan is currently being implemented across the City. The plan involves removal of old, unsafe equipment and replacement with new, safer equipment that meets current national safety standards.

Recreation, the Department's largest division, operates ten neighborhood recreation centers, twelve swimming pools, two developing sports complexes, and offers a variety of athletic programs and leagues for youth and adults. In addition, boating, fishing, pony rides, train tours, miniature golf, and concessions are available at the division's 119 acre Watson Park location in south Wichita. In the downtown area, the division manages the Ralph Wulz Riverside Tennis Center, which offers fourteen lighted tennis courts on a year-round basis. Lessons are available from an on-site tennis professional, and the Center's pro shop maintains a large supply of racquets, balls, and other supplies. The Center hosts several regional tennis tournaments annually. Plans are being developed to further increase tournament play. Tennis outreach programs are being initiated in conjunction

with national tennis organizations such as the U. S. Tennis Association.

The Recreation Division manages and operates Summer of Discovery, a new ten-week summer program for children ages 6 to 12. The licensed program is available to all children, regardless of income, with enrollment fees charged on an ability-to-pay basis.



*Summer of Discovery offers ten fun, educational activities for children at ten different sites over ten weeks.*

CityArts is the City's new cultural arts center. Opened to the public in 1998, CityArts provides art classes for all ages at its downtown location in the East Bank area with a primary emphasis on engaging beginners and children in the arts. CityArts offers classes in pottery, sculpture, silversmithing, woodworking, painting, weaving, and other arts. Future plans call for a computer arts lab.

The Century II/Expo Hall complex in the East Bank area is Wichita's premier venue for entertainment, conventions, trade shows, and meetings. In 1998, the venue hosted twenty-two state conventions, two regional/national conventions, and five trade shows, with a direct economic impact of over \$6.4 million. In addition, Century II/Expo Hall management saw 714,989 people pass through the complex's doors to attend various consumer shows, cultural events, entertainment events, and meetings.

Selected Performance Measures			
	1998	1999	2000
State conventions hosted	22	25	28
Attendance at hosted conventions	50,650	50,000	52,000
Convention event days hosted	63	70	75
Total direct economic impact of hosted state conventions	\$5,326,011	\$5,500,000	\$5,500,000

The Omnisphere Science Center provides science shows and interactive displays from its location in the downtown

area. The Center caters heavily to elementary age school children in the Wichita area, with teachers often scheduling class field trips to the facility. With the opening of the new Exploration Place Science Center in 2000, Omnisphere will close its doors. Preliminary study is being undertaken to open a Museum of Aviation History at the site.

Selected Performance Measure			
	1998	1999	2000
Science program satisfaction rating – school groups	99.6%	100%	100%

The Wichita Boathouse, donated to the City in 1998, offers rental meeting, banquet, and reception facilities. The facility is typically booked at least six months in advance, and in 1998, it generated over \$96,000 in revenue. The Boathouse grounds contain a replica of an America's Cup-winning sailboat.



*Park and Recreation operates several premier meeting and banquet facilities, including the Wichita Boathouse.*

The Wichita/Sedgwick County Historical Museum, located in the old Wichita City Hall, provides documentation of life in Wichita as it has developed over the decades. City funding provides salary and benefits for the museum's director, along with insurance and utilities. Private funding provides additional resources for housing the collection.

**Finance and Operations.** Apart from the City's municipal golf course system, which is funded completely by user fees, Park and Recreation Department operations are a part of the General Fund. Six divisions--Recreation, CityArts, Century II, Expo Hall, Omnisphere, and the Wichita Boathouse-- recover at least some portion of their operational costs from user fees. The remaining divisions are funded entirely by general taxpayer monies.

With cost recovery in the Recreation Division typically in the 32-33 percent range, a concerted effort is being undertaken to more fully recover costs from user fees. Management and program staff have been charged with meeting incremental

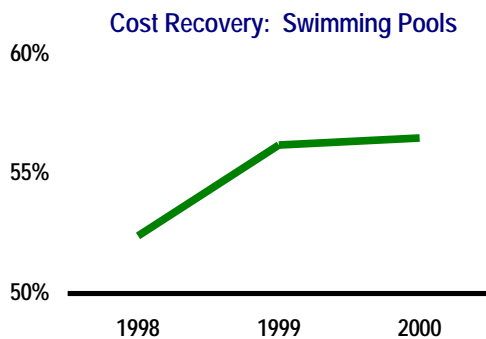
annual performance goals for increasing cost recovery at numerous City facilities, including recreation centers, swimming pools, and athletic fields.

Selected Performance Measures			
	1998	1999	2000
Cost recovery – recreation centers	26.0%	30.9%	33.0%
Cost recovery – swimming pools	52.4%	56.2%	56.5%

At a number of facilities, this directive has resulted in upward adjustments to user fees and selective reductions in part-time staffing levels. Actual results are monitored on a monthly basis, and adjustments are implemented when necessary or appropriate.



*Minisa Pool, located in the Riverside neighborhood, is one of twelve revenue-generating swimming pools operated by Park and Recreation every summer.*



Service delivery is key to good recreation programming. As is often the case in communities, underprivileged children in Wichita have many times not had the same ease of access to recreational resources which children from better socioeconomic backgrounds have taken for granted. In an effort to bridge this gap, the budget includes resources in 2000 for neighborhood recreational programming. A recreation specialist experienced in working with

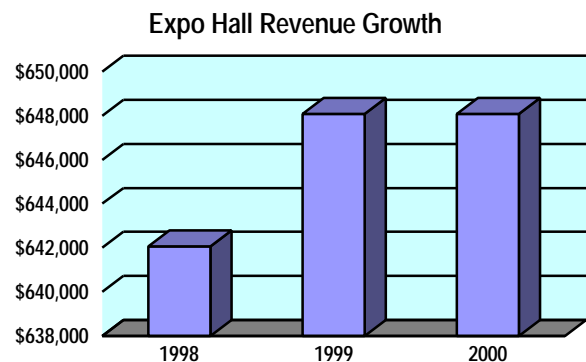
neighborhoods and developing youth recreation programs at the grassroots level will provide leadership. Developing and coordinating programming out of neighborhood sites such as recreation centers, schools, and churches, this specialist will custom-tailor recreational activities to meet the needs of local citizens. Program results will be evaluated regularly based on a well-developed set of performance criteria.

The budget includes funding for improvements at the Ralph Wulz Riverside Tennis Center authorized by the City Council in 1998 and 1999. These improvements include resurfacing of selected courts, building modifications, and the purchase of equipment. The intent of the improvements is to increase activity at the center, specifically tournaments, lessons, and special events.

Additional resources are added in 2000 for maintenance of high visibility landscape areas in the City's downtown area, parks, rights-of-way, and athletic fields. Crews in the Landscape & Forestry and Maintenance divisions perform maintenance activities.

Maintenance of athletic fields, including those at the South Lakes and Northeast sports complexes, has been reorganized and shifted from the Recreation Division to the Maintenance Division, allowing for better coordination of activities, increased efficiency, and improved accountability. Staff time is charged off against the appropriate Recreation cost centers to facilitate the tracking of cost recovery of specific athletic facilities and functions.

Century II and Expo Hall revenues are expected to continue rising as a result of increased activity associated with the new Hyatt Regency Hotel in the East Bank area. To help



support the increased volume, additional resources have been added at Expo Hall to coordinate convention activity. Expo Hall typically recovers the majority of its costs from meeting room rentals, exhibition spaces, and other user

fees; however, any operating shortfalls are paid from Tourism and Convention Fund monies.

CityArts activity levels are projected to increase in 2000 in connection with greater public awareness of the facility. Revenues from class registrations offset slightly less than 30 percent of the annual budgeted operating expenditures. Two full-time art educator positions are included in the budget with the requirement that each recover 50 percent of their annual operating cost.

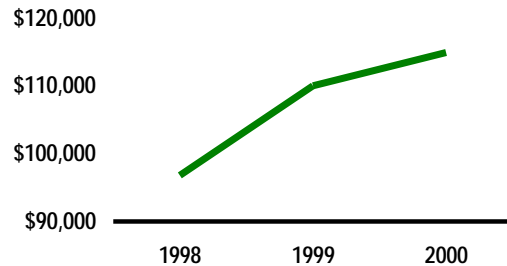


*Art educators respond to increased demands for art classes.*

The Wichita Boathouse continues to be popular with both out-of-town visitors and Wichitans, hosting a wide array of meetings, banquets, and receptions. Highly utilized for wedding receptions, the venue has also hosted international gatherings of corporate executives with significant

investments in the Wichita area economy. Upgrades to the catering kitchen have facilitated growth in banquet and reception business.

#### Wichita Boathouse Revenues



In its first full year of operation under City management, the Wichita Boathouse generated almost \$97,000 in revenue, exceeding projections by almost ten percent. In 1999, revenue growth of almost fourteen percent above 1998 levels is expected.

Due in large part to its strategic, gateway location near the Kellogg Flyover, key East Bank convention facilities, and the Museum District, a Visitor Information Center is being installed on the Boathouse's first floor. When fully operational, the Center will be staffed by volunteers and feature an interactive Internet website.

#### Park and Recreation Budget Summary

	1998 Actual	1999 Adopted	1999 Revised	2000 Adopted	2001 Approved
Personal Services	9,286,012	10,149,460	10,002,450	10,653,920	10,884,620
Contractual Services	3,329,733	3,315,270	3,487,950	3,467,760	3,424,010
Commodities	684,246	633,990	716,360	677,640	702,910
Capital Outlay	39,976	7,470	190,140	82,920	74,420
Other	297,883	178,180	279,690	240,940	232,410
<b>Total Park and Recreation Expenditures</b>	<b>13,637,851</b>	<b>14,284,370</b>	<b>14,676,590</b>	<b>15,123,180</b>	<b>15,318,370</b>
<b>Position Summary</b>					
Total full-time	210	210	207	216	216
Total part-time	640	641	600	604	604
Total FTE	380.25	380.75	378.75	386.25	386.25